

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 080902Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7017

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 1771

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET TV DISCUSSION OF CHINA

REF: MOSCOW 1642

1. SUMMARY. IN A MAJOR TELEVISION DISCUSSION OF CHINA ON FEBRUARY 5, SOVIET COMMENTATORS REITERATED LONG-STANDING SOVIET THEMES: THE PRC'S PROGRESS IN ITS FIRST DECADE AND ITS PROBLEMS SINCE, PEKING'S IDEOLOGICAL DEVIATION FROM TRUE SOCIALISM, THE INTRIGUES OF THE CHINESE STRUGGLE FOR POWER, MOSCOW'S CONSISTENT BUT FRUITLESS EFFORTS TO SETTLE DIFFERENCES, AND PEKING'S ATTEMPT TO FAN TENSIONS IN THE
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WORLD. THE DISCUSSION DID NOT TOUCH ON THE NEW PRC

CONSTITUTION, WHICH HAD BEEN DENOUNCED IN PRAVDA THE SAME DAY (REFTEL), AND ALSO IGNORED THE NEW PRC LEADERSHIP LINE-UP EXCEPT COLLECTIVELY, AS THE "MAOIST LEADERSHIP". THERE WAS NO MENTION OF NEW BORDER INCIDENTS, BUT A COMMENT ON "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" FOLLOWED MOSCOW'S RECENT HARD LINE AND SHOWED NO INCLINATION TO DO ANYTHING TO SOLVE "A BIT" OF THE PROBLEM. IN DISCUSSING THE PROGRAM WITH AN EMBOFF FEBRUARY 6, THE PRC DCM DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY INCREASE IN TENSIONS ON THE BORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PROGRAM WAS "STUDIO 9," HOSTED BY POLITICAL OBSERVER VALENTIN ZORIN AND SHOWN AT PRIME TIME, 6:50-7:50 P.M. THE FORMAT IS THAT GUEST EXPERTS ANSWER LETTERS FROM VIEWERS ON CURRENT TOPICS. THE GUEST PANEL ON FEB 5 INCLUDED MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE MFA'S FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION, SERGEI TIKHVINSKIY, A FORMER AMBASSADOR AND CORRESPONDENT-MEMBER OF THE SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, AND A. BOVIN, IZVESTIYA COMMENTATOR. KAPITSA WAS CLEARLY THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE OF THE THREE, BUT THERE WERE NO EVIDENT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, THE COMMENTS ALL SOUNDED REHEARSED, AND NONE DEVIATED FROM STANDARD SOVIET POSITIONS. ALTHOUGH THE PROGRAM HAD BEEN POSTPONED FROM ITS SCHEDULED SHOWING TWO WEEKS AGO, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE NPC DOCUMENTS HAD JUST COME OUT, THE PANEL DID NOT DISCUSS THE NPC IN DEPTH AND MOST OF THE COMMENTS WERE RESTATEMENTS OF TIMELESS SOVIET THEMES.

3. THE FIRST QUESTION, IN PARAPHRASE, WAS "WHY ARE THE PRC LEADERS AGAINST DETENTE, WHY DO THE CHINESE CLAIM OUR TERRITORY, HOW IS IT THAT AFTER ALL OUR PAST HELP THINGS HAVE COME TO THIS?" THE THREE COMMENTATORS TOOK TURNS ANSWERING IT. TIKHVINSKIY STRESSED THE HOPE AND ENTHUSIASM OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION, NOTING HIS OWN PRESENCE IN CHINA WHEN THE PRC WAS FOUNDED. HE SPOKE OF THE PROGRESS IN THE EARLY YEARS, SOVIET AID, AND THE LATER DISTORTIONS WHICH MAO INTRODUCED IN HIS EFFORTS TO FEED NATIONALISM AND CHAUVINISM. BOVIN POINTED TO THE FAULTS OF THE CCP LINE. CHINA WOULD

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FACE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN BUILDING SOCIALISM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH ITS HUGE POPULATION, BACKWARD INDUSTRY, ETC. BUT TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE PARTY, LED BY MAO, FOLLOWED THE WRONG PATH. KAPITSA NOTED THE UPS AND DOWNS OF CHINA'S LONG HISTORY, AND PARALLELED THEM WITH THE SEQUENCE SINCE 1949. EARLY SUCCESSES WERE FOLLOWED BY MAO'S VARIOUS CAMPAIGNS SINCE THE GREAT LEAP. EACH SWING TOWARD RECOVERY WAS

FOLLOWED BY A NEW CAMPAIGN. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, THE EARLY YEARS BROUGHT NOTABLE SUCCESS, SAID KAPITSA, BUT THEN MAO STARTED TO EXPERIMENT. THE RESULTS HAVE HURT CHINA MORE THAN IT CAN MEASURE--CONSIDER THE MANY THOUSANDS OF ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TRAINED IN THE EIGHT YEARS SINCE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION DISRUPTED HIGHER EDUCATION. BUT SUCCESS WOULD STILL BE POSSIBLE, HE SAID, IF CHINA WOULD RETURN TO THE SOCIALIST PATH.

4. THE SECOND QUESTION CONCERNED IDEOLOGY AND THE NPC. BOVIN NOTED SOME SPECULATION FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS THAT MAO'S ABSENCE MEANT THAT HE HAD STEPPED OR BEEN PUSHED ASIDE. BOVIN DISAGREED WITH THIS VIEW, SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT MAO WOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD VETO POWER. INTRIGUES ABOUT THE SUCCESSION ARE GOING ON NOW, SAID BOVIN, AND MADAM MAO IS AT THE CENTER OF THEM. THE DOMESTIC PRC SITUATION IS VERY UNSTABLE AND STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE; MAO'S METHODS SPAWN SUCH INTRIGUES. KAPITSA SAID HE THOUGHT THAT MAO WAS SAVING HIS STRENGTH TO USE ON BEHALF OF HIS GROUP OF FAVORITES. HIS ABSENCE FROM THE NPC WAS NOT ACCIDENTAL. TIKHVINSKIY SAID THAT THE CONFLICT IN CHINA IS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM AND ITS OPPONENTS; MAO IS AMONG THE LATTER. BOVIN ADDED THAT THERE ARE OTHER ISSUES AS WELL, SPECIFICALLY MAO'S ROLE IN THE SYSTEM.

5. THE THIRD QUESTION WAS ON SOVIET-PRC RELATIONS. KAPITSA HADLED THIS ONE ALONE AND WITH FLOURISH. HE EXPRESSED THE DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT BY THE SOVIETS, "WHO DID SO MUCH TO HELP THEIR CHINESE BROTHERS," AT THE "TRAGEDY" OF RECENT YEARS, THE RENEWED HARDSHIPS FOR THE CHINESE PEOPLE. BUT "WE ARE NOT TO BLAME," HE SAID, CONFIDENTIAL

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-WE HAVE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN US, BUT THE CHINESE REFUSE EVEN TO DISCUSS THEM. IN 1969, SAID KAPITSA, MAO CLAIMED THAT THE DEATH OF PEOPLE DID NOT MATTER, THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO MOBILIZE THE PEOPLE. MAO SAYS THAT THE USSR IS THE NUMBER ONE ENEMY. MAO NEEDS SUCH AN OUTSIDE ENEMY. BUT WE DO NOT SEE IT THAT WAY. AFTER THE KOSYGIN-CHOU MEETING IN 1969, BOTH SIDES RETURNED THEIR AMBASSADORS, REGULAR TRADE RESUMED AND BORDER TALKS WERE BEGUN. THE SOVIETS REPEATEDLY TABLED PROPOSALS (HE MENTIONED 1971 AND 1973 SPECIFICALLY) TO SOLVE THE BORDER DISPUTE, BUT THE CHINESE WOULD NOT RESPOND. THE MODERATOR THEN NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN PRESS HAD MADE MUCH OF THE PRC NOVEMBER 6 GREETINGS. KAPITSA SAID THAT MUCH OF THE SPECULATION WAS ILL-FOUNDED, THEN ASSERTED THAT THE CHINESE, AS IN

THE PAST, HAD DEMANDED THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET FORCES FROM "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" AS A PRECONDITION FOR DISCUSSION OF THE BORDER ISSUE. HTHIS WAS OBVIOUS NONSENSE, HE SAID; WHY SHOULD THE SOVIETS WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES JUST BECAUSE THE CHINESE CLAIM CERTAIN AREAS? NO GOVERNMENT DOES THIS. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE CHINESE CLAIM TO "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" AND WE PLAN TO CONTINUE HOLDING OUR TERRITORY. CHOU EN-LAI'S REPORT TO THE NPC SHOWED THAT PEKING HAS NO POSITIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS; HE SIMPLY REITERATED THE USUAL ABSURD CHINESE CHARGES AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION.

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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6. THE LAST QUESTION CONCERNED THE VLADIVOSTOK SUMMIT AND

THE SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT TO LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS. THE WRITER ASKED WHETHER CHINA WOULD ALSO AGREE TO LIMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH WEAPONS AND, IF NOT, WHAT IT WOULD MEAN FOR MOSCOW. KAPITSA ANSWERED VERY CAREFULLY THAT ONE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW THE SITUATION EVOLVED. CHINA HAS FAR TO GO, HE SAID. BUT MOSCOW CONSIDERS THE LIMITATIONS ON STRATEGIC ARMS TO BE A MAJOR STEP IN THE PROCESS OF DETENTE. CHINA IS OPPOSED TO DETENTE AND TO THE LIMITATIONS OF THE ARMS RACE. BUT PEKING'S LEADERS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY. MOSCOW HAS NO QUARREL WITH CHINA'S ADVANCEMENT, NOR WITH

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ITS IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S TRIP BROUGHT ABOUT THE VIRTUAL NORMALIZATION OF SINO-US RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH SOME OBSTACLES STILL REMAIN. THE MODERATOR INTERRUPTED AT THIS POINT TO SAY THAT ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON, MANY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS COMMENTED ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE THREE POWERS, BUT ESPECIALLY ON THE COMPARISON BETWEEN US-CHINA AND US-SOVIET RELATIONS. (COMMENT: THE IMPLICATION OF ZORIN'S COMMENT WAS THAT INFLUENTIAL AMERICANS REALIZED HOW MUCH MORE IMPORTANT US RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW WERE THAN THOSE WITH PEKING.)

7. KAPITSA QUOTED MAO AS BEING UNCONCERNED ABOUT A SOVIET-US NUCLEAR WAR. PEKING ENCOURAGES TENSIONS, HE SAID, AND TICKED OFF THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA AND THE UN AS PLACES WHERE PEKING FOSTERS TENSIONS AND DISPUTES. TIKHVINSKY EXPANDED ON THIS POINT, SAYING THAT PEKING'S DISRUPTIVE TACTICS WERE NOT ONLY ANTI-SOVIET BUT WERE DIRECTED AGAINST THE CONSTRUCTIVE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE NOTED THE VOTE ON REGIONAL GROUPINGS IN UNESCO, WHERE CHINA WAS JOINED IN OPPOSITION ONLY BY ALBANIA, CHILE AND ISRAEL. KAPITSA, IN A SUMMING-UP STATEMENT, SAID THAT IN THE PRESENT PERIOD OF MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THE COLD WAR TOWARD COOPERATION, AWAY FROM TENSIONS TOWARD DETENTE, THE CHINESE LEADERS WERE OUT OF STEP. THEY WERE NOT CONSTRUCTIVE BUT OBSTRUCTIVE, AND FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE SAME SIDE WITH THE WORST IMPERIALISTS. THIS POLICY HAS LED CHINA TO NEW ISOLATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. TIKHVINSKY CLOSED WITH THE USUAL STATEMENT OF FAITH THAT THE CHINESE PEOPLE WOULD EVENTUALLY SEE THE ERROR OF THEIR LEADERS' WAYS AND THE BENEFITS OF IMPROVING THEIR TIES WITH THE SOCIALIST BROTHERHOOD. HE THEN READ THE PORTION OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH TO THE 24TH PARTY CONGRESS CALLING FOR THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

8. COMMENT: THIS DISCUSSION WAS NOTABLE MAINLY FOR

ITS REPETITION OF STANDARD SOVIET POSITIONS AND FOR
BARELY MENTIONING THE RECENT NPC. KAPITSA'S COMMENT
ON "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" FOLLOWS THE LINE ESTABLISHED
BY BREZHNEV'S SPEECH IN ULAN BATOR. IT DID NOT IMPLY THAT
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MOSCOW INTENDED TO DO "SOMETHING TO SOLVE A BIT OF THE PROBLEM,"
AS CHOU HAD ASKED. HOWEVER, NEITHER THESE COMMENTATORS
NOR THE ALEKSANDROV ARTICLE REFLECTED ANY INCREASE IN
TENSIONS ON THE BORDER, AS THE SOVIETS HAD HINTED EARLIER
(MOSCOW 1376).

9. IN A CONVERSAION ON FEBRUARY 6, PRC DCM MA LIEH
SAID THAT THE SOVIET VIEWS WERE UNCHANGED. HE SAID THAT
KAPITSA'S LINE ON "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" WAS CONSISTENT
WITH RECENT SOVIET COMMENTS AND THAT IT DISTORTED THE
CHINESE POSITION, BUT HE DENIED SPECIFICALLY THAT THERE
HAD BEEN ANY INCREASE IN TENSIONS ON THE BORDER. HE
MADE SOME NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT KAPITSA ("HE DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ABOUT CHINA OR CHINESE HISTORY,
YET HE IS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING
WITH US"), THE SAID THAT PROGRAMS LIKE ZORIN'S
WERE NOT AIMED AT PEKING OR WASHINGTON, BUT WERE
A MEANS BY WHICH MOSCOW PUTS OUT ITS OFFICIAL
LINE.
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